



Construction Lab Gives Cutting Edge

Working in the new apparel construction lab, Chelsi Hornbaker displays two little girls' skirts – one made from her grandfather's

old ties and a denim skirt made from the bottom of adult jeans – part of her 10 children's designs for the annual Fashion Merchandise and Design Program fashion show.

Steffani Day is preparing a line of women's professional clothes, using the sergers to finish a ruffled sleeveless blouse. Both students agree that in the competitive field of fashion design you have to understand the entire gamut of the industry from construction to tailoring to design.

JCCC aims to give students a cutting edge in the industry with a new apparel construction lab for fashion students, which opened in fall 2008 in room 343A of the Office and Classroom Building. The room is approximately twice the size of the old lab and features its own dressing room.

The space houses 12 regular sewing machines, two industrial sewing machines, three cork-covered cutting boards and three pressing stations with gravity-free irons. A linoleum floor replaces carpet in the room so pins are easier to locate, and lighting is enhanced for close work.

The dedicated lab is used for construction, tailoring and garment design classes, and as an open lab for students to work on projects. The extra space allows classes to increase head count from eight to 12. Gone are the days when students had to cut patterns on their knees in the hallways or use a public restroom as the dressing room, as was the case when the lab was located in room 142 OCB.

The design component of FMD was added in 2000, and this spring 10 students are scheduled

to receive associate degrees in fashion design.

"Fashion design is a very competitive market, and aspiring designers have to learn the basics of construction before they enter the field," said Joy Rhodes, associate professor, fashion merchandising and design.

JCCC is seeing design graduates transfer to prestigious design schools – Fashion Institute of Technology, New York; Columbia College, Chicago; and the Art Institute of Chicago. There is also a demand for people who want to start their own tailoring businesses. To that end, a fashion alteration entrepreneurship certificate is in development, and those classes also will be held in the lab.

"Kansas City has a huge market for alterations with bridal, evening and department stores and for self-employed tailors," Rhodes said.

Currently fashion merchandising and design offers a fashion merchandising AAS degree, fashion design AAS degree, and certificates in visual merchandising, fashion design entrepreneurship and fashion merchandising entrepreneurship. 🌸

Lab

Student Steffani Day (left) fits one of her designs to a fashion form with the help of Joy Rhodes, associate professor, fashion merchandising and design.



Chelsi Hornbaker sews a tie skirt, part of her children's line, Patchwork, in the new apparel construction lab.